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Dr Lobsang Sangay

Robert Destro

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TIBET'S LEADER-IN-EXILE VISITS WHITE HOUSE, A FIRST IN 60 YRS

The head of Tibetan government-in-exile Dr Lobsang Sangay visited the White House on Saturday and met US officials

MEETS U.S. COORDINATOR FOR TIBETAN ISSUES

Sangay, who is the President of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), was invited to the White House to meet the newly-appointed US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, Robert Destro. The move is likely to enrage China, which has already criticised Destro's appointment, saying it amounted to political manipulation aimed at destabilising Tibet.

U.S. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF GOVT-IN-EXILE?

- For the last 60 years, the head of CTA was not allowed to visit the White House as the US did not recognise the Tibet's govt-in-exile
- Appointment of a Special Coordinator for Tibet and the US engagement with Sangay are being read as Washington tacitly lending legitimacy to the government-in-exile

SANGAY

HAD VISITED THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT LAST MONTH

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Moderna, Pfizer vaccines could fizzle out for India

Bulk of all vaccines being developed pre-booked by rich countries, storage also an issue

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @ New Delhi

NEWS of the successful phase-3 clinical trials of the Covid-19 vaccines being developed by US biotech firms Moderna and Pfizer has cheered the world, but it may be a bit early for India to celebrate.

Pfizer, along with its German partner BioNTech, has already applied for emergency use authorisation of its vaccine from the US drug regulator, the Food and Drug Administration, and if approved, it could be available for regulated use as early as next month.

But India may not stand to benefit much, at least in the near future, either from the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine or the one being developed by Moderna. This is because of three reasons.

Firstly, a bulk of all the vaccines being developed, Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna included, has been pre-booked by rich countries, leaving low-income countries in the cold.

Secondly, the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines need to be stored at extremely cold conditions, something the cold chains in India may not have the capacity to do.

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine candidate needs to be stored at -70 degrees Celsius, which is impractical in India, while the one by Moderna requires to be kept at -20 degrees Celsius.

In India, most vaccines under the National Immunisation Programme, except the polio and rotavirus vaccines, need to be stored at 2-8 degree Celsius. The polio vaccine needs to be stored at -20° C, but once opened it can be simply refrigerated and used within four weeks.

Storage of the Moderna vaccine, at -20°C, is difficult but not impossible. But the company has no immediate plans for distribution in India.

Lastly, the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines are expensive. While the final price is yet to be fixed, they could cost up to $20-37 per dose, which may be unaffordable for the national vaccination programme.

This, in effect, means India will have to wait for its homegrown vaccines such as the ones being developed by Bharat Biotech and Zydus, or those that are being developed here by Oxford's AstraZeneca and Russia's Sputnik V.

CONTINUED ON: P9

THE STATE OF PLAY

Vaccine maker	Annual capacity	Pre-booked	Price
Moderna	500m-1b doses	78%	$32-37
Pfizer -BioNTech	500m -800m	79%	$20
AstraZeneca-Oxford-SII	1.2b	80%	$3-5
Sputnik V	1.2b	NA	NA
Johnson &Johnson	1b	NA	$10

Vaccine status in India

- Homegrown vaccine under phase 2/3 trial in India, one each by Bharat Biotech and Zydus Cadila
- Developed outside but under phase 3 trial in India, one each by Oxford University-AstraZeneca (Indian partner SII) and Russia's Gamaleya Institute (Indian partner Dr. Reddy's)
- Biological E is latest vaccine maker to receive permission to test indigenous vaccine in humans
- **30** Total Covid-19 vaccines under pre-clinical/clinical trials in India
- **500 million** Total doses expected by June-July, 2021
- Vaccines likely to be available by June-July next year
- Serum Institute of India 15 million doses per month Cost $3 per dose
- Bharat Biotech 300 million annual (as of now, to be scaled to 500 million) Cost undisclosed

CENTRE TO HELP AUGMENT KARNATAKA'S COLD CHAIN INFRA FOR VACCINE DELIVERY

IFFATH FATHIMA AND RANJANI MADHAVAN @ Bengaluru

The Centre will provide Karnataka with equipment that will add to the state's existing cold chain infrastructure for vaccine delivery.

The Union Government will provide Karnataka with 33 walk-in coolers, 866 small ice line refrigerators, 64 large ice line refrigerators, 22 deep freezers to store vaccine doses, according to Dr Rajani Nageshrao, Deputy Director (Immunisation) in the Health Department.

The Centre will also provide vaccine vans, cold boxes and ice packs to augment the state's equipment. At present, Karnataka has 3,371 ice line refrigerators, 3,006 deep freezers, 10 walk-in coolers, and four walk-in freezers.

Globally, immunisation is carried out through the cold chain, a system that ensures vaccine vials are stored at the ideal temperature from the time of manufacture to the point of administration.

Dr Rajani also said that in 2017-18, the state had the infrastructure to store MR vaccine vials for 1.5 crore children who had to be immunised in a staggered manner.

Districts have been told to identify storage spaces in addition to the existing cold chain infrastructure. "We are working with the Animal Husbandry and Horticulture Departments to keep their refrigerators and coolers ready in case we need it. Storage facilities are also available with the Karnataka State Drugs and Logistics and Warehousing Society, and with private establishments," she pointed out.

Dr Rajani said that storage for syringes requires moisture-free conditions, for which the Health Department has approached other arms of the government such as the Food Corporation of India. P3

At G20 summit, Modi calls for new global index for post-corona world

PUSHKAR BANAKAR @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday virtually participated in the G20 Summit hosted by Saudi Arabia where he called for decisive action by the grouping which is not limited to economic recovery, jobs and trade.

"The PM called for a new Global Index for the post-corona world that comprises four key elements — creation of a vast talent pool; ensuring that technology reaches all segments of society; transparency in systems of governance; and dealing with Mother Earth with a spirit of trusteeship," sources said. The Summit, under Saudi presidency, is centered on the theme 'Realising Opportunities of 21st Century for All' has assumed greater importance in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The agenda of the summit is spread out over two days with two sessions focused on overcoming the pandemic, economic recovery and restoring jobs, and building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future. P9

WITH THIS ISSUE

PLUS 12 PAGES MAGAZINE

Union Home Minister Amit Shah waves to crowds outside Chennai International Airport, as he landed in the city on Saturday. | DEBADATTA MALLICK

B'luru has reaffirmed IT leadership role: Dy CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister Dr C N Ashwath Narayan, who worked relentlessly for the Bengaluru Tech Summit 2020, said the the three-day event which concluded on Saturday, proved that they could make things happen despite the challenging situation faced due to the Covid-19 pandemic. "It saw convergence of ideas from across the world and Bengaluru reasserted its top position in the IT sector," Ashwath Narayan, who is also IT/BT and Skill Development minister told The New Sunday Express.

Stating that Bengaluru is competing with the top IT cities in the world, the Deputy CM said the tech summit helped facilitate and ensure synergy between innovators, technologists, those working in the R&D sector, entrepreneurs, investors, start-ups and others to share knowledge and ideas. "We are focused on all these aspects and many people were surprised that we could do such an excellent job even in these challenging circumstances. It was a good message for many countries and companies that we are very serious about what we do," he said.

PM Narendra Modi had on Thursday inaugurated the summit and eight MoUs were signed in last three days. The state is also is aiming at gaining the top spot in bio-economy and digital economy. "Various departments will be part of the efforts and enabling technology will play a huge role in it," he added. FULL INTERVIEW | P4

BJP and AIADMK will fight polls together, signals Shah

T MURUGANANDHAM @ Chennai

THE alliance between BJP and AIADMK will continue for the upcoming Assembly elections, in which the battle will be between 'dynasty' and 'development'. This was the message conveyed during Union Home Minister and BJP's election strategist Amit Shah's visit to the State, which was turned into a celebratory event by its ally, the AIADMK.

Edappadi K Palaniswami got a high-octane start to his party's election campaign, with the Home Minister terming Tamil Nadu as the best-governed State in the country.

Shah was accorded a grand welcome at the airport.

Overwhelmed by the crowd that had gathered by the roadside on his way from the airport to the hotel, Shah stepped out of his motorcade to interact with the public. Shortly afterwards, he declared open the Kannankottai-Thervoy Kandigai reservoir and laid the foundation for infrastructure projects worth ₹67,378 crore at an event held in the Kalaivanar Arangam.

Speaking there, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami and Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam said their party's alliance with the BJP will continue for next elections. P7

Postgraduate Ayurveda docs can now perform surgeries, ortho procedures

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

POSTGRADUATE degree holders of Ayurveda can now perform orthopaedic, ophthalmology, dental and ENT procedures as well as surgeries, besides general surgery.

The Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM) said in a gazette notification that those holding masters in Ayurveda will get formal training for such procedures and surgeries, hitherto done only by practitioners of modern medicine. The CCIM amended Indian Medicine Central Council (Post Graduate Ayurveda Education) Regulations 2016, to allow the PG students of Ayurveda medicine to practise general surgery.

The Act has also been renamed Indian Medicine Central Council (Post Graduate Ayurveda Education) Amendment Regulations, 2020.

The training modules for surgical procedures will be added to the curriculum of Ayurvedic studies.

The gazette notification says the students will be trained in two streams of surgery and would be awarded titles of MS (Ayurved) Shalya Tantra (general surgery) and MS (Ayurved) Shalakya Tantra (diseases of eye, ear, nose, throat, head and oro-dentistry).

The development indicates the growing emphasis on traditional medicine under the Narendra Modi government.

The Indian Medical Association, the largest body of private doctors in India, has been openly opposing policy moves by the Centre to mix modern medicine with the traditional systems of ayurveda, yoga and naturopathy, unani, siddha, and homoeopathy (AYUSH).

NEP 2020

Holistic edu is the way ahead: Kasturirangan

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

IT is often said that India produces very competent scientists and engineers, but they fall short of being great innovators. To address this, engineering institutions such as Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) will move towards a more holistic, multi-disciplinary education with more Arts and Humanities, said former ISRO chairman and head of the drafting committee on National Education Policy (NEP), K Kasturirangan, on Saturday.

Elaborating on the changes envisaged in the NEP, Kasturirangan said that all institutes will make efforts to incorporate more vocational subjects and soft skills. Arts and Humanities students too will learn more science, he pointed out, while speaking on the NEP-2020 at the Bengaluru Tech Summit. The audience included delegates from 25 countries.

Emphasising on the importance of the knowledge of arts, crafts, architecture and aesthetics, as part of science and engineering education, Kasturirangan said many institutes are working to promote greater inter-disciplinary approach in graduate training and scholarship. P6

EXPRESS READ

India summons senior Pak diplomat

New Delhi: India on Saturday summoned the Charge d'Affaires of the Pakistan High Commission and lodged a strong protest with him over attempts by Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed to carry out attacks in Jammu and Kashmir. P9

Delhi riots: Court grants bail to activist

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Saturday granted bail to student activist Gulfisha Fatima in a case related to communal violence in Northeast Delhi in February. Relief was granted to her on furnishing a bail bond of Rs 30,000 with one surety of like amount.

CM warns against forceful bandh

Bengaluru: As pro-Kannada groups decided to go ahead with Karnataka bandh on December 5 against the establishment of the Maratha Development Corporation, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Saturday asked them to withdraw it. P4

JOE BIDEN
GETS MICHIGAN BACKING

The US state's elections agency recommended that the November 3 results be certified next week by state canvassers, a decision that would bless Biden's victory over President Donald Trump. The recommendation was posted online with the formal Monday meeting notice of the Board of State Canvassers | P12

FAMILY FIRST

Wrong milky way... Belagavi artist gets 'not for sale' packets

TUSHAR A MAJUKAR @ Belagavi

WHEN noted artist Shirish Deshpande opened a box containing toned milk packets recently, he was surprised to see 'a not for sale' label on them.

The milk packets were meant to be distributed free of cost to Anganwadis by the Andhra Pradesh government under the YSR Sampoorna Poshana Scheme. He wondered how this 'milky way' happened.

Deshpande purchases a box comprising 20 toned milk packets of Nandini Trupti (having a shelf life of six months) brand once in a week from a milk distributing agent. Each milk packet is 500 ml. But on October 28, he received the box of milk packets, which had a different brand name 'Vijaya Vajra'. The box was sealed with the brand name Nandini of KMF.

Speaking to *The New Sunday Express*, Deshpande said he had approached the milk distributing agent who had delivered the box and showed the packet. "The agent too was surprised and said that he would inform the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) authorities," he said.

Deshpande then decided to try the new brand of milk and when he checked the packet, he found a label which stated 'Exclusive supply under YSR Sampoorna Poshana and not for sale'. That is when he contacted this newspaper and a few of his friends.

A packet of Vijaya Vajra milk received by a Belagavi resident; (right) The label on the packet states 'Not for sale'

When contacted, Ubedullah Khan, Managing Director, KMF's Belagavi Cooperative Milk Producers Societies Union Limited, said that the Vijaya Vajra brand of toned milk is a production of KMF which is supplied to Andra Pradesh. He said that the boxes are kept separately and sent to that state whenever required.

Khan said that it could be that by mistake some boxes of Vijaya Vajra must have got mixed with the boxes of toned milk packets which are distributed in Belagavi. "I will conduct an inquiry into this," he said.